

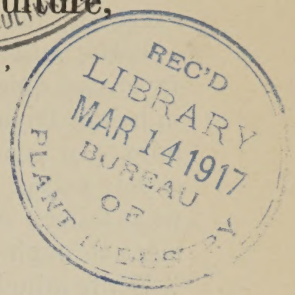
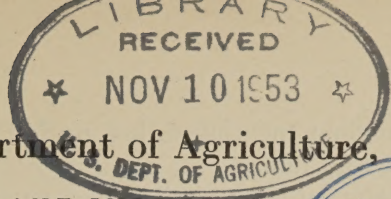
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United States Department of Agriculture.

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY,

New and Rare Seed Distribution,

WASHINGTON, D. C.

MILO.

OBJECT OF THE DISTRIBUTION.—The distribution of new and rare seeds has for its object the dissemination of new and rare crops, improved strains of staple crops, and high-grade seed of crops new to sections where the data of the Department of Agriculture indicate such crops to be of considerable promise. Each package contains a sufficient quantity for a preliminary trial, and where it is at all practicable the recipient is urged to use the seed for the production of stocks for future plantings. It is believed that if this practice is followed consistently, it will result in a material improvement in the crops of the country.

Please make a full report on the inclosed blank regarding the results you obtain with the seed.

DESCRIPTION.

The milos (*Andropogon sorghum*) are characterized by rather slender, pithy stems, broad leaves, which yellow badly as the plant ripens, a rather compact, ovoid or ellipsoidal head, which is usually recurved or “goosenecked” except in the improved varieties, and seeds which are round in outline and more or less flattened. The milos have marked ability to withstand drought and hold their seed much more firmly than the white durras, such as “Jerusalem corn” and feterita. The fodder is not equal to that of the kafirs or the sweet sorghums either in yield or quality.

Standard milo.—This is the common variety of yellow milo, which until the last two or three years was the only kind handled by seedsmen. It has stems 6 to 8 feet in height and mostly recurved heads, matures about one week earlier than Blackhull kafir, and is adapted to the same region or a little drier one.

Dwarf milo.—This is an early and leafy strain of yellow milo which under ordinary conditions grows from 3½ to 5 feet high and matures in 90 to 100 days. Continued selection has eliminated to a large extent the tendency to produce recurved heads. In good stands fully 90 per cent of the heads are erect, or practically so, but in thin stands a somewhat larger number of heads will be recurved. Dwarf milo is one of the earliest of the grain sorghums and the short season of growth allows it to be grown farther west than the Standard milo or the kafirs. It is adapted to the western fourth of Kansas and Oklahoma, southeastern Colorado, northwestern Texas, and many parts of New Mexico, Arizona, and California. This variety will be found equal to any of the sorghums for grain production in

the regions mentioned, but its fodder yield is less than that of the sweet sorghums.

White milo.—This is a new variety of milo, which is gaining in favor as a quick-maturing and dependable grain sorghum. It varies in height from 4 to 6 feet and ripens a few days earlier than Dwarf milo. In general appearance it resembles the latter variety very closely except that the seeds are white and the stalks average somewhat taller. A dwarf strain of White milo is in process of development through selection.

White milo is adapted to the same regions as Dwarf milo, but will mature somewhat farther north. It has been ripened as far north as Redfield, S. Dak., and is recommended for trial in western Nebraska and South Dakota.

PLANTING.

Milo should be planted from two to four weeks later than Indian corn except in regions troubled with the sorghum midge, where very early plantings are recommended. It can be surface planted or listed in rows 36 to 44 inches apart. Listing places the roots deep in the soil and aids the plant to withstand drought. From 4 to 6 pounds of clean seed will be sufficient for an acre. With well-prepared ground and seed of good germination the lower rate of seeding is advised. Thick stands produce finer stalks and smaller heads, but will be liable to greater injury from drought than the comparatively thin stands.

CULTIVATION.

Milo should be cultivated much the same as Indian corn. It is usually best to cultivate two or three times with a harrow while the plants are small, but as soon as sufficient growth is made the crop should be given a fairly deep and thorough cultivation. Two or three subsequent and shallower cultivations are desirable to conserve moisture. Care should be used to have these later cultivations shallow, in order to avoid breaking many feeding roots.

HARVESTING.

If harvested for both grain and fodder the crop should be cut in the late dough stage. Cutting with a corn binder and shocking in the field is the least expensive method. A corn binder is the most practical method of harvesting if the crop is to be utilized as silage. If grown solely for the grain yield, it should be allowed to stand until the stems at the base of the head are dry. If the heads are cut by hand from the standing stalks, the remainder of the crop can be utilized for pasture.

FEEDING.

Milo is most valuable as a grain crop and provides the feeder in semiarid regions with a very satisfactory substitute for corn. When used as a grain feed it is well to grind milo or its full value will not be realized. When fed to cattle in the bundle, hogs should always be kept in the feed lot to pick up the undigested and scattered grains. It has been found in practical feeding tests that it takes about 10 pounds of milo to equal 9 pounds of corn. Milo makes good silage, but the tonnage is not so large as that of kafir or the sweet sorghums. Much of the milo is fed in the bundle to both horses and cattle and with good results, providing thus both grain and roughage. A little cottonseed meal or some other concentrate rich in protein and fat should be fed with it.

SEED SELECTION.

With a few exceptions, home-grown seed is always best. It is therefore essential that each farmer select and keep his own seed from year to year. The best time to make selections is in the field as soon as the earlier heads mature. Dwarf, leafy plants without side branches and with little tendency to tiller should be selected. The stalks should bear from 14 to 16 leaves and be as sweet and juicy as possible. A head that is entirely out of the boot and, whenever possible, an erect head well filled at both butt and tip, should be selected. In this seed selection care should be taken to avoid hybrids. The exceedingly large heads are generally the result of hybridization or of some local variation in stand or soil conditions. Selections should be made 100 yards or more from any other variety of sorghum, as they all cross freely. By careful selection and the growing of your own seed, yields can be materially increased.

Approved.

WM. A. TAYLOR,
Chief of Bureau.

DECEMBER 13, 1916.

